

# Strategies for Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Early Childhood Environments

Early Childhood Institute  
April 19-20, 2023

Andrea Bartholomew  
School Readiness Branch Manager  
Kentucky Department of Education

Kathy Meredith  
Early Learning Specialist  
Kentucky Department of Education

# Who are we? Who are you?

- Presenters: Kathy Meredith and Andrea Bartholomew
- Who is in the room today?
  - Teachers
    - Child Care
    - State-funded preschool
    - Head Start
  - Administrators
  - Others

# Session Norms

- Take care of you
- Ask questions, tell stories
- Be open and honest, no judgement of self or others
- Relax and enjoy learning!

# Individual Adaptations and Modifications to Support Inclusion

- Identifying Individual Child Needs
- Tips on Using Reinforcement Effectively
- Implementation of Individualized Supports

# Key Points:

- How to evaluate key skills for new children
- How to assess current classroom implementation for simple changes that can improve individualized instruction
- Key strategies that can support individual children's participation and success in the classroom

# Guiding Principles

- Foundation for classroom is a High-Quality setting for typically developing children
- Inclusion from Day 1
- Typical children are more than models for appropriate behavior
- Learning and instruction continues until behaviors are generalized across contexts
- Utilization of a variety of Evidence-based interventions (PBS, Peers, functional communication systems, systematic instruction)

# Inclusion in Kentucky

- The state-funded preschool program in Kentucky is intended to be inclusive of students with disabilities.
- Approximately 75% of all preschool students with disabilities are included in the regular preschool classroom in Kentucky.
- Kentucky ranks in the top 10 states for inclusive programs for preschool, based on national data collected by the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center.

# “If you know the what and the why, the how becomes easier”

## Deidra Harris

- We know the underlying reason most children 0-5 years exhibit challenging behaviors is due to lack of emotional and social competence.
- We also know that a small percentage of children exhibit challenging behaviors as a result of their cognitive disability or trauma.

# Pyramid Model Framework



# Framework for Successful Inclusion

## High Quality EC Setting

Classroom Environment  
Classroom Schedule  
Adult Roles  
and Responsibilities  
Building  
Relationships and  
Promoting Participation

## General Classroom Modification

Routines  
Visual Support  
Social Skills Instruction

## Individualized Supports

Using Reinforcement  
Individual Schedules  
Augmentative and  
Alternative Communication  
Structured Teaching  
Data-base Decision Making  
PBIS

# The Initial Assessment Should Focus on:

1. **Reinforcer Assessment:** What does the child LOVE???
2. **Child's Social Interest:** Do they show interest, are they aloof, do they actively avoid? Is it the same across adults and peers?
3. **Play Skills/Engagement:** When left on their own what do they play with? Is it fleeting or sustained? Do you need to actively teach play skills?
4. **Language/Communication Ability:** How does the child communicate their wants and needs? Do they have a consistent functional communication system?
5. **Behaviors:** Are their behaviors of concern? Can you identify the functions (SEAT: Sensory, Escape, Attention, Tangible)

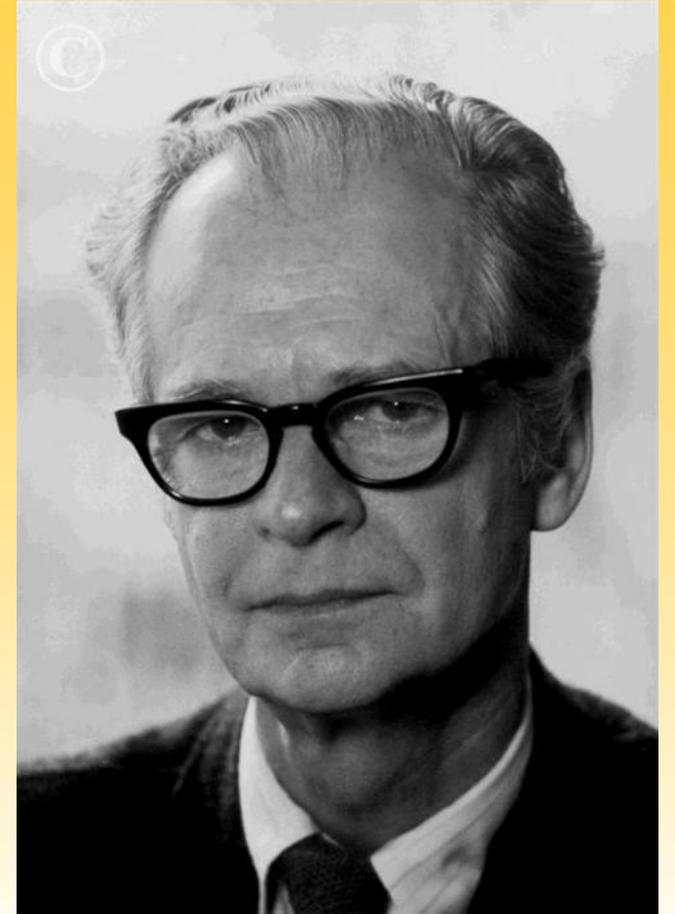
# Things You Want to Be Working on Day 1

Use the assessment data from the previous slide to make decisions when thinking about the following:

- Social Responsiveness
- Play skills
- Engagement
- Language and Communication: **Every Day, All Day**

“The way positive reinforcement is carried out is more important than the amount.”

B. F. Skinner



AJ482A [RM] © www.visualphotos.com

# Using Reinforcement

- Reinforcer: Increases the probability that a behavior will occur again.
- Types of Reinforcement (There are many!)
  - Tangibles
  - Edibles
  - Attention
  - Social
  - Sensory

# Identifying Potential Reinforcers

## Use Multiple Methods

- Observations
- Interviews
- Reduced List
- Quick Paired-comparison



# Handout 1 and 2: Reinforcement Inventory Forms

[www.challengingbehavior.org](http://www.challengingbehavior.org)

English



## Reinforcer Inventory

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Mark the items/activities that your child prefers.

- X = Something they like a lot
- ☺ = Something they LOVE (Favorite)

It is recommended that adults review/visit this form periodically as desirable items tend to change frequently!

Social Reinforcers	Sensory Reinforcers	Activity Reinforcers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Adult attention <input type="checkbox"/> Hugs <input type="checkbox"/> Kisses <input type="checkbox"/> Sit in Adults Lap <input type="checkbox"/> High five/Knuckle Bumps <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal Praise <input type="checkbox"/> Thumbs up sign <input type="checkbox"/> Group Cheers <input type="checkbox"/> Applause <input type="checkbox"/> Eye Contact <input type="checkbox"/> Tickle <input type="checkbox"/> Hand Shakes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Vibrating Toys <input type="checkbox"/> Roll up in a Blanket <input type="checkbox"/> Blowing Bubbles <input type="checkbox"/> Swinging <input type="checkbox"/> Being Held/Picked Up <input type="checkbox"/> Squeezes <input type="checkbox"/> Back Rub/Scratched <input type="checkbox"/> Shoes Off <input type="checkbox"/> Being Brushed <input type="checkbox"/> Twirl Around/Spin <input type="checkbox"/> Jumping <input type="checkbox"/> Tickle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Puzzles <input type="checkbox"/> Manipulatives (Peg Board, beads) <input type="checkbox"/> Legos/Blocks <input type="checkbox"/> Dress up (hats, jewelry, dresses) <input type="checkbox"/> Drawing <input type="checkbox"/> Computer <input type="checkbox"/> Painting <input type="checkbox"/> Riding toys <input type="checkbox"/> Water play <input type="checkbox"/> Books <input type="checkbox"/> Sand play <input type="checkbox"/> Going for a Walk

(Continues on next page)

LEAP Preschool Model Forms: Adapted from A Treasure Chest of Behavioral Strategies for Individuals with Autism by B.Fouse & M.Wheeler, 1977

Spanish



## Inventario de reforzadores

Nombre del niño: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

Marque los artículos/actividades preferidas por su hijo.

- X = Algo que le gusta mucho
- ☺ = Algo que le ENCANTA (Favorito)

Se les recomienda a los adultos repasar/volver a consultar este formulario de forma periódica ya que los artículos deseables tienden a cambiar rápidamente!

Reforzadores sociales	Reforzadores sociales	Reforzadores de actividad
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Atención de un adulto <input type="checkbox"/> Abrazos <input type="checkbox"/> Besos <input type="checkbox"/> Sentarse en el regazo de un adulto <input type="checkbox"/> Chocar los cinco/ Choque de Puños <input type="checkbox"/> Elogios verbales <input type="checkbox"/> Señal del pulgar hacia arriba <input type="checkbox"/> Aclamaciones en grupo <input type="checkbox"/> Aplausos <input type="checkbox"/> Contacto visual <input type="checkbox"/> Cosquillas <input type="checkbox"/> Darse la mano	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Juguetes vibradores <input type="checkbox"/> Enrollarse en una manta <input type="checkbox"/> Soplar burbujas <input type="checkbox"/> Columpiarse <input type="checkbox"/> Ser Sostenido/Levantado <input type="checkbox"/> Apretones <input type="checkbox"/> Masajes en/Rascarse la espalda <input type="checkbox"/> Quitarse los zapatos <input type="checkbox"/> Ser peinado <input type="checkbox"/> Bailar/Girar en círculo <input type="checkbox"/> Saltar <input type="checkbox"/> Cosquillas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Rompecabezas <input type="checkbox"/> Manipulativos (Tablero de clavijas, cuentas) <input type="checkbox"/> Ladrillos LEGO/bloques <input type="checkbox"/> Vestirse (sombreros, joyas, vestidos) <input type="checkbox"/> Dibujar <input type="checkbox"/> Computadora <input type="checkbox"/> Pintar <input type="checkbox"/> Juguetes de montar <input type="checkbox"/> Juegos acuáticos <input type="checkbox"/> Libros <input type="checkbox"/> Juego con arena <input type="checkbox"/> Salir a caminar

LEAP Preschool Model Forms: Adapted from A Treasure Chest of Behavioral Strategies for Individuals with Autism por B.Fouse y M.Wheeler, 1977

# Keys to Using Reinforcement

- Reinforce Immediately
- Pair Tangibles and Positive Descriptive Feedback
- Be Behavior Specific
- Fade Tangible Reinforcement

# Individual Supports

1. How can I change the environment to better support an individual?
2. How can I modify/change an activity to better support an individual?
3. How can I modify/change the materials to better support an individual?
4. How can I modify my instruction to better support an individual?

# 1. Modifying the Environment

- General Classroom Design
- Opening and closing centers
- Broad use of Visual Supports
- Adapt the Physical Environment

# Example – Visually Distracting Environment



# Example – Visually Inviting Environment



## 2. Modify Activities

Routines<sup>3</sup> established throughout the day

- Beginning, Middle and End
- Answers to the Four Questions

Activity specific visuals to create clear expectations

- Center choice system
- Play scripts or visuals (mini schedules) for activities
- Large Group Easel – Visual Focal Point

Promotion of peer-peer interactions across the day

# Arrival Sign In

## Modifications

- Beginning, Middle, End
- Visual Supports
- Individualization

## Embedded Instruction

- Peer Interactions
- Name Identification
- Writing Name



# Play Scripts

- Helps teach the play skills, generate ideas, supports engagement
- Provides Beginning, Middle, End
- Promotes peer interactions

## How to be a Server

The image displays a set of six panels, each illustrating a step in the role of a server. The panels are arranged in a 2x3 grid. The top row contains three panels: 'I pass out menus' (showing a menu board and a menu card), 'I go and take orders' (showing a person writing on a notepad), and 'I make the food' (showing a person cooking at a stove). The bottom row contains three panels: 'I deliver the food' (showing a person handing a plate to another person), 'I take the money' (showing a person holding a stack of coins and a bill), and 'I put away food' (showing a person placing a plate on a shelf).

I pass out menus

I go and take orders

I make the food

I deliver the food

I take the money

I put away food

# Art Activities

- Clear Beginning, Middle, End
- Visuals of process (steps)
- Peers as Table Captains



# Setting Up Activities to Promote Social Engagement

- Embedding Peer-to-Peer interaction routines
- Putting children in positions that promote interactions
- Establishing expectations around peer interactions



# 3. Modify Materials

- Rotate Materials and Centers
- Balance of new/novel and existing/familiar
- Establish clear Beginning, Middle and End for Activities
- Personalize Materials
- Include High Preference materials



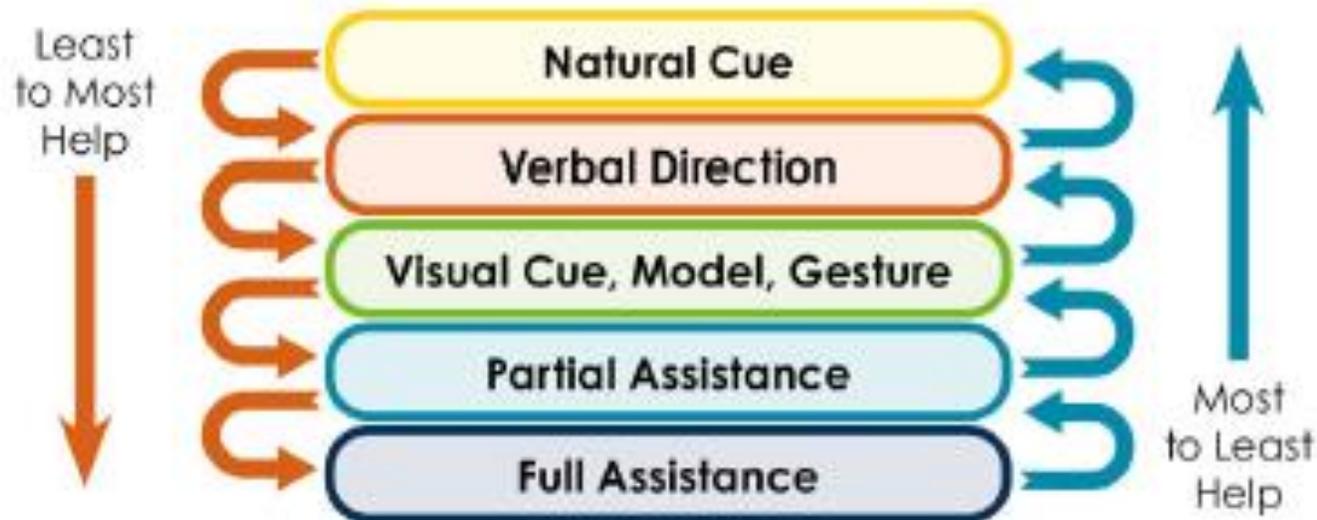
# 4. Modify Instruction

- Naturalistic Instruction (wait time!!!)
- Systematic
- Embedded Instruction
- Individualized Reinforcers
- Structured Teaching (i.e., Workbaskets)
- Additional Visuals
  - Individual Schedules
  - Picture Communication Systems (AAC)
- Large Group Monitoring

# Handout #3-Direction Delivery: Prompting Hierarchy



## Providing Helping Prompts



# When implementing a prompting hierarchy...

- Always provide the help needed for a child to be successful
- Always describe what you are doing so children know what to expect and can feel safe and secure
- Provide extra positive descriptive feedback and celebration as the child is learning a new skill

# Individual Support Strategies

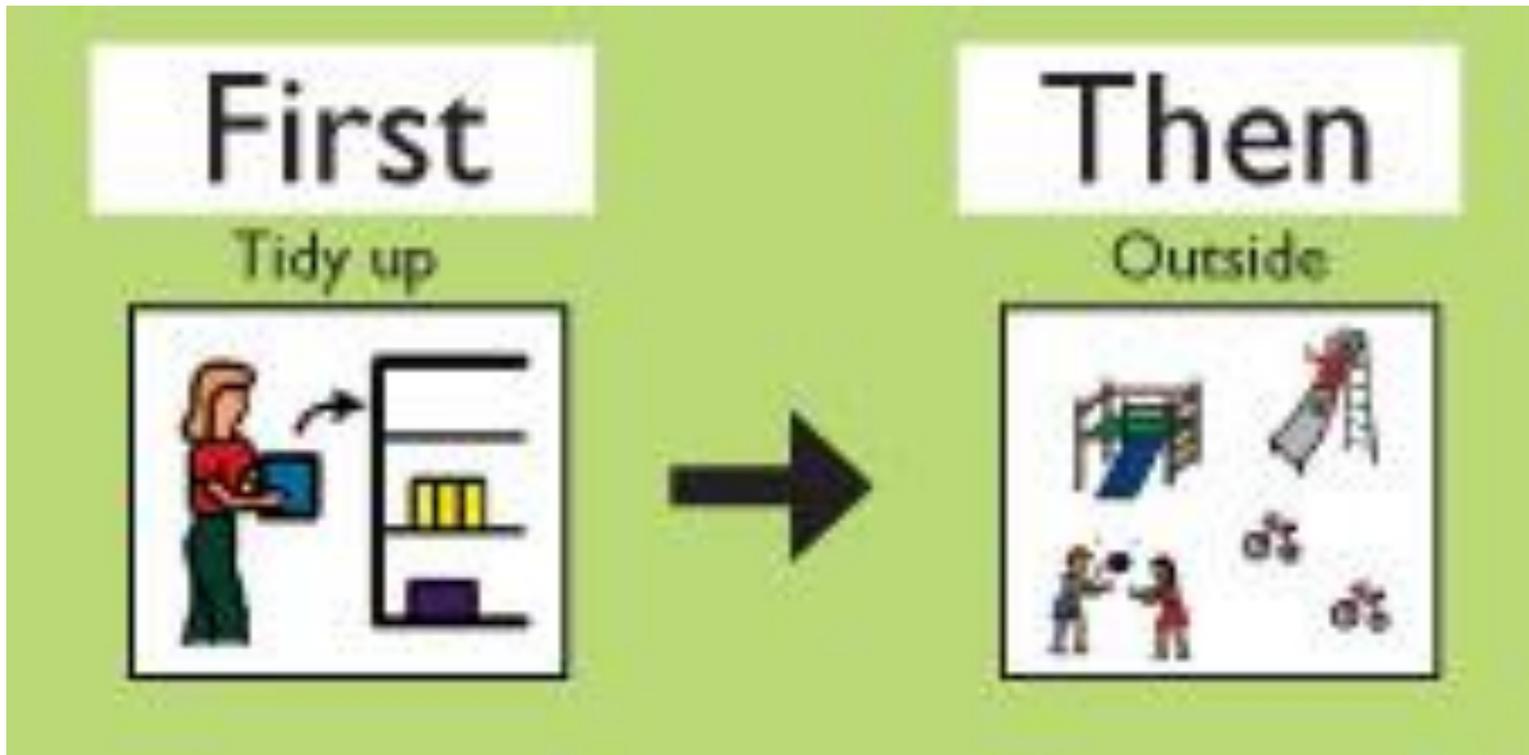
- Individual Schedules
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)
- Structured Teaching

# Individual Schedules

- Additional visual supports for a specific child (or children).
- Basic types of schedules
  1. First – Then
  2. Move to “All Done” Pocket
  3. Reveal Step by Step
  4. Use as a Transition Tool (match to sample)

# First - Then

- An additional visual strategy used to clearly define a sequence of events.
- Based on the Premack Principle
  - “First do \_\_\_\_\_ Then you can \_\_\_\_\_”



# Visual Schedules

## Move to All Done

- Child checks their schedule, moves the completed activity to the “All Done” pocket and then knows what is next.

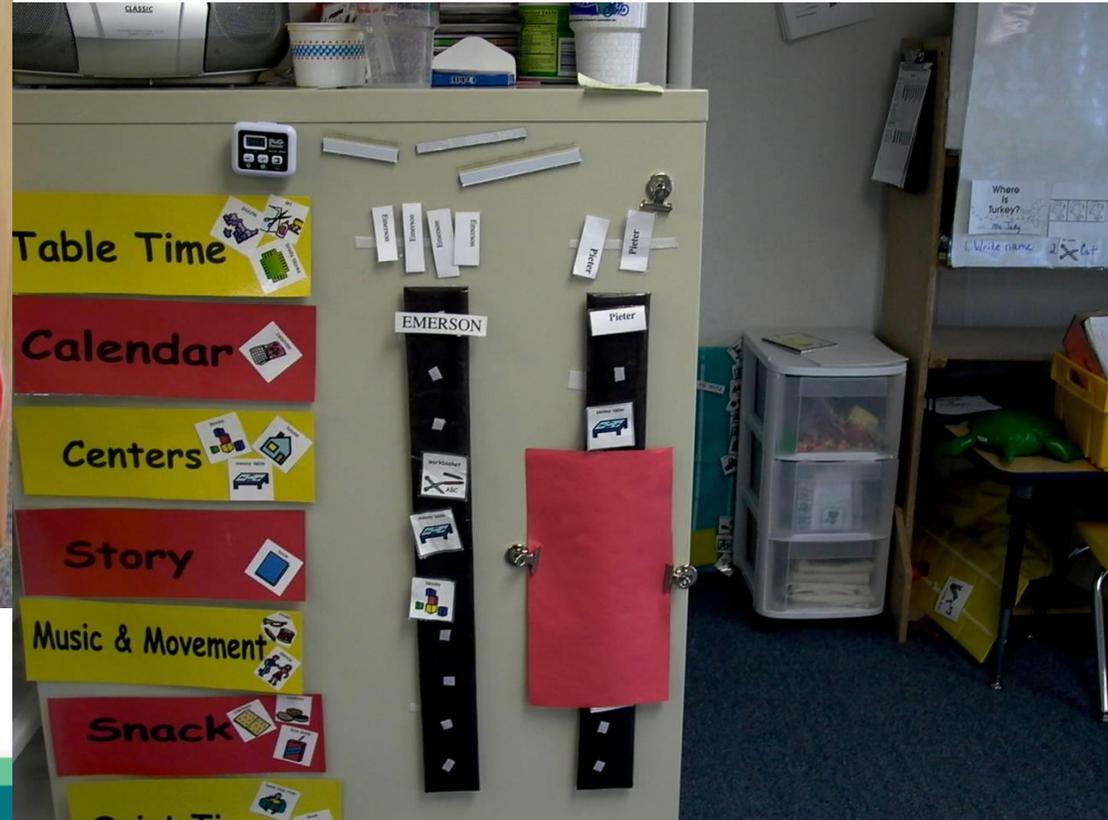


## Use as a Transition Tool

- Child checks their schedule, takes the picture for the next activity and travels with it to the next event/activity.
- Matches the traveling picture to a sample posted in that area.

# Individualization

- How the schedule should be used needs to be individualized
- Progress towards independence



# Pyramid Model Resources

[Visual Supports for Routines, Schedules and Transitions  
\(challengingbehavior.org\)](http://challengingbehavior.org)

This link will take you directly to a resource that provides the actual first/then templates, real pictures and specific directions for how to develop visual supports

# Toddler Transition Strategy

## Toddler Classroom Waiting Activities

In this one-year old toddler classroom the children are moving from hand washing to going outside. While one teacher helps the children with hand washing the other teacher does interactive activities with those children who are waiting including reviewing the visual outside rules. Once they are ready to go, the teacher reviews the expectations for moving from the classroom to going outside.

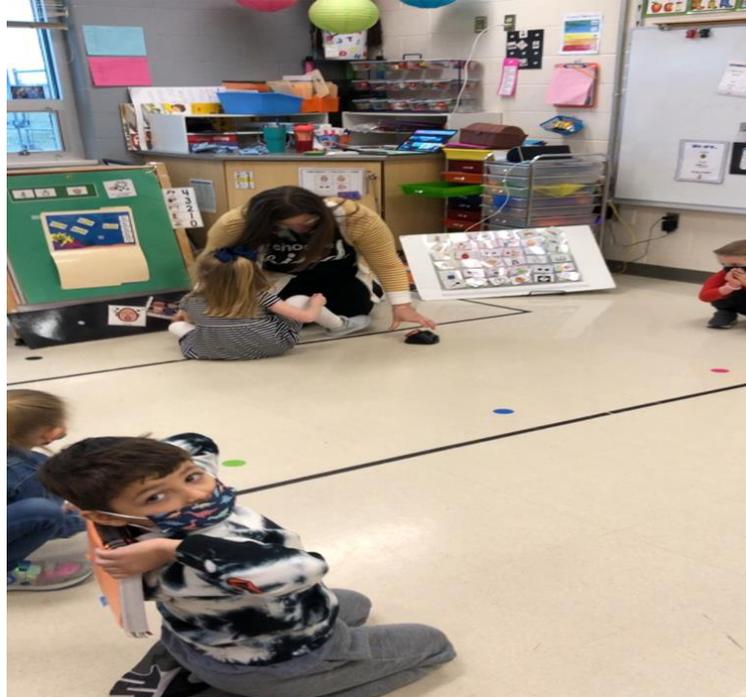
# Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

Emphasis should be on a Total Communication Approach

- Using simple sign language and gestures
- Core Language Boards
- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
- Audio Output Devices (Big Mac, Dinovox, tablets, etc.)

# Utilization of AAC

- Promotes participation for non or emerging verbal children.
- Must be incorporated throughout the day.
- Must be utilized with peers as well as adults.
- **MUST** Emphasize the Social Aspect of communication!!!



[AAC Video.mov](#)

This video shows a class singing a song led by the teacher. A switch is used by a student to respond with her peers to the pause in the song.

# Structured Teaching Mobile Work Bins

## Work Bins/Baskets

- Structured system to support children that have a hard time maintaining engagement or children that need additional support learning specific play skills
- Incorporate it into the broader classroom (not tucked in a corner)

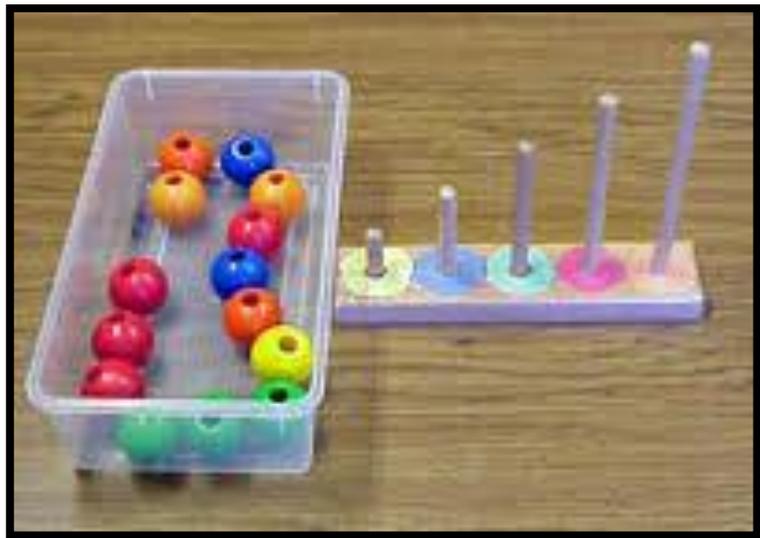


# Structured Teaching Work Boxes

- Teaches a progression of left to right
- Teaches completion of a task
- Uses concrete tasks with clear beginning and end
- Incorporates reinforcement throughout



# Visual Support Examples



# The Power of Peers

This video is of two children playing a game of tossing balls in a bucket. One child is supporting another in completing the task of refilling their bucket so they can toss more balls into the larger bucket.

# Major Messages to Take Home



- Some children will need additional support to learn social-emotional skills.
- Individualized teaching occurs within relationships as children engage in routines, interactions and activities.
- Teachers should partner with families to identify skills to target.
- To provide individualized teaching, you need to identify how and when the skill will be taught and monitor the child's progress in learning the skill.

# Individualizing Instruction Key Points

- Get to know the child's strengths and needs including strong reinforcers.
- Incorporate the use of systematic Reinforcement in your instruction.
- Look for ways to adapt/modify the Environment, Activities, Materials and Instruction.
- Utilize Individual Support Strategies (e.g., visual supports and schedules, AAC and structured teaching)
- Have systems in place to monitor and track progress, use data to drive your instruction

# References:

- Pyramid Model Consortium; [www.pyramidmodel.org](http://www.pyramidmodel.org)
- University of Denver; Morgridge College of Education
- The National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations;  
[www.challengingbehavior.org](http://www.challengingbehavior.org)
- The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center;  
[www.ECTAcenter.org](http://www.ECTAcenter.org)